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FRESNO CHAFFEE ZOO MOURNS PASSING OF AFRICAN LION KIKI

Fresno, CA - Officials at Fresno Chaffee Zoo are deeply saddened to announce the passing of female African lion, Kiki. She was humanely euthanized after years of battling progressive arthritis.

Since her arrival in 2015, Zoo staff have been monitoring and treating Kiki's spinal arthritis. The Zoo's veterinary and animal care staff have helped Kiki manage her arthritis through excellent husbandry practices and medications.

"Recently, Kiki displayed a progressive decline in her mobility and extreme weakness in her rear legs," said Dr. Shannon Nodolf, Chief Veterinary Officer. "Her pain levels were no longer manageable and for Kiki's quality of life, the decision was made to humanely euthanize her."

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of our lion pride matriarch, Kiki," said Fresno Chaffee Zoo CEO, Jon Forrest Dohlin. "She was an amazing ambassador to her species. This loss reminds us about the importance of the preservation of these beautiful animals both in zoos and the wild."

Kiki was 17 years old and the matriarch of the lion pride at the Zoo. In the wild, African lions live between 10 to 14 years of age. According to the IUCN, lions are currently listed as a vulnerable species. Populations in the wild are declining due to habitat loss created by droughts, soil erosion, overgrazing, and human expansion.

Kiki arrived at the Fresno Chaffee Zoo in 2015, along with daughter Zamaya. While at the Zoo, Kiki gave birth to male lion cub Kijani who is now a father at the Dallas Zoo. The Zoo's animal care team said Kiki was a great matriarch and mother who loved to nap in the sunshine.

Fresno Chaffee Zoo has been a long-time partner of the Ruaha Carnivore Project (RCP) in Tanzania. They work to protect lions and other large carnivores by helping local communities develop effective strategies for harmonious human-carnivore coexistence. RCP is one of many conservation organizations the Zoo supports through the Fresno Chaffee Zoo Conservation Fund.

"Fresno Chaffee Zoo inspires wonder of our natural world, provides an engaging learning environment, and creates a passion for conservation."

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